THE SPEAKABLE TURK

By Theodore N. Pockman

TO THE average American the Turk is a swarthy cut-throat, waving a scimitar, bellowing "Allah," and wallowing in the blood of infidel giaours. History is responsible for the epithets "terrible" and "unspeakable" which have clung so tenaciously to the popular conception of the Ottoman that it comes as a rude shock to find the average Turk a human being, and, furthermore, decidedly "speakable."

During the recent British campaign in Mesopotamia a band of Arabs, retaining all their ancient notions of warfare, proved a thorn in the flesh of both the English and Turkish forces. Hovering about the flanks of both armies, they would raid first one side and then the other, choosing opportunities for securing the most plunder with the least risk to themselves. Those tactics naturally proved so annoying to both sides that one commander sent his opponent the following message:

"I am thoroughly tired of these Bedouin robbers and their treachery. You must be also. Let us, therefore, make a truce with one another for two or three days and mete out to these Arabs such punishment as will put an end to their tricks."

The author of this unusual request was not the British commander, but the "unspeakable" Turk! The Turk who writes of this incident does not add what answer was given, but it is safe to say that such a sporting proposition could not be turned down by a true Britisher.

From the very entrance of Turkey into this world war—a step respulsive to a people already heartily sick of being drafted into the ranks—the English press has taken a different attitude toward their Turkish foes than it has toward the Teutons. A gleaning of the leading periodicals reveals countless incidents of the Turks' chivalry as fighters and aboveboard methods when not under the direct observation of their German officers.

"I have such admiration for the Turks," wrote a British officer serving in Mesopotamia to "The London Morning Post," February 7, "the pukka Turks, I mean, not the Kurdish savages who butcher Armenians or the Bagdad Turco-Arabs, that I wonder more and more how they ever came into the German net. They did a thing after Ctesiphon that commands recognition.

"A bargeload of 300 of our wounded stuck in the mud, and with some medical personnel on board had to be abandoned. The Turks towed the barge downstream, and under cover of the white flag sent the whole lot, including the medical personnel, back to the British camp unharmed in any way.

"I know of two wounded British officers left out the night after the battle who were found by the Turks. In both cases the Turks took away all their equipment, haversack, belt, revolver, papers and field glasses, but both men say they were not harmed in any way. In the case of one man they gave him water to drink, loosened his coat and made him more comfortable. They left both for our people to collect the next morning. It is the Arabs who maltreat our wounded and commit all sorts of atrocities."

Recent dispatches from that far distant front—so brief as to escape general notice—have disclosed the same attitude between the lines of the meagre official reports. After the fall of Kut-el-Amara the Turkish commander gave General Townshend back his sword. Later reports announce the exchange of disabled prisoners, suggested by the Turks!

From another theatre of the war where the Turks have been fighting comes the story of an incident of the common soldier's attitude.

"No Nation Could Have Conducted Warfare in a More Clean-Handed Manner."

In a letter published in "The London Times" of February 8 a British officer wrote from Salonica:

"Imagine this war! Some of our people went out on a reconnoissance in front of the line where there were a number of Turks. The latter were as courteous as possible and showed them the best places for geese and helped to stalk them!"

From the Gallipoli Peninsula, however, have come the most tales of the individual bravery and courtesy of the Turk as a fighting man. A dozen instances could be mentioned. Truces were suggested by the Turks to allow both sides to bury their dead; a dozen more of occasions where Red Cross flags and flags of truce were carefully respected.

When the Turks were plunged into the war by the Germans English business men of fighting age in Constantinople immediately offered their services to the King, although on amicable relations with the Turks. In one instance one of these Englishmen, who was assigned to the fleet at the Dardanelles as interpreter with the rank of lieutenant, was sent forward to meet a Turkish officer advancing under a flag of truce.

Imagine the lieutenant's surprise to find the Turkish officer one of his respected friends of Constantinople. The truce quickly arranged, they chatted for a few moments, and while the lieutenant was returning to his lines a stray shrapnel burst near him. The next day a profuse apology for the accident reached him from the "unspeakable" Turk.

The New Zealand and Australian forces, themselves no amateurs at the game of fighting from natural cover, found much to learn from the Turks, who as individuals showed great ingenuity and sportsmanship in their ruses. Many a Turk, completely disguised as a bush or small tree by tying greens about him, picked off many a Tommy before the game was discovered.

At one point in the Anzac region a Turkish sniper was giving the English some trouble, and an Irishman who was a good shot was told off to deal with him. For the next few minutes the two, at no great distance, took turns in trying to account for each other.

At last the Turk wounded the Irishman. Then those who were watching the marksmanship contest saw the Turk creep cautiously from his shelter, leaving his rifle behind him. He crossed the space to his enemy and assisted him in binding up his wound from the emergency kit with which each British soldier is supplied. Then the two men shared a drink of water and some smokes and the Turk crept back to his trench.

It is a long, long way from the Turk "set in authority" and entering into pacts with Germany to the simple minded individual sitting cross-legged in a coffee house smoking a narghileh, reclining by his "sweet waters," making *kef* or even fighting a war in the trenches for a cause in which he himself is sure to lose, no matter which side wins.

The Turkish government, withal, is vile. American residents in Constantinople during the conflict have found the native newspapers full of officially inspired articles designed to stir up popular feeling against the British when the underlying sentiment has tended dangerously against Germany's aspirations. One preposterous news story related in great detail how, during the Turkish feast of Bairam, the Turkish troops threw cigarettes over into the British trenches, and how the British retaliated by throwing back smokes which would explode and injure the faces of the Moslem troops.

The writer remembers the startling dispatches to the press in the Turkish capital during the first Balkan war. In the week that the Bulgarians pushed the Turks back to Tchataldja the total number of kilometres advanced by the Turks in the news dispatches would have placed the Turkish army somewhere in Scandinavia.

Turkish Women Bring Flowers and Sweets to Wounded Foemen in Hospitals.

"No nation could possibly have conducted warfare in a more aboveboard and clean-handed manner than the Turks," said Norman Wilkinson, the English artist, after a visit to Gallipoli. "A thousand pities that the Turks should have been guilty of such fiendish acts as the Armenian massacres; for had it not been for this the Turk would have emerged from this trial with a character from which the stain of lust and cruelty had been effectively removed."

The blot of wiping out fully one-half of the entire Armenian nation is indelible, but at the same time official. The permitting such wholesale slaughter even to start is cause enough for abolishing official Turkey once for all. The fierce Kurds wanted no better chance than that afforded them by the Turkish Government, which ordered great batches of Armenians deported to the places where they were most exposed to the mountain tribes, for whom not a soul can hold any brief. When official Turkey opens jails that the inmates may escort villages of Armenians to unsettled country something is very likely to happen. Even the rank and file of the regular army, made up of simple, primitive men who in their own communities would be law-abiding, could not resist the temptation of the unusual circumstances which put them in charge of escorting masses of women on long marches. The Turkish private will do anything he is told by a superior.

Properly led, the Turk has many admirable qualities, in peace as well as in war, but, unfortunately, he very seldom has been fortunate in his leaders. Back in the early days of the Crimean War the Turks would ask the British Red Cross doctors day after day: "When are you English coming to help us? Your English officers lead us; our officers drive us."

Lord Headley paid a tribute to the Turk in the London "Daily Graphic" of March 11, just before the Allies' trade conference was held in Paris. After declaring that Germany might await the decision with considerable uneasiness, he added:

"I do not think that our misled and misguided friends, the Turks, will have any such fears as to the result of the conference, as we have no quarrel with them, and they have never shown any malice or hatred and have behaved well as warriors in the field. Where we find cases of cruelty it is in ill-disciplined irregulars of the bashibazouk type, recruited from criminals and outcasts of many countries.

"The Turk is a good fellow all round. I make these few remarks anent the Turks because it is highly probable that at an early date the position of Turkey in this war may undergo considerable change, and in the near future the Bagdad line may not be in German hands.

"The sole reason why the Turk has been alluded to as 'the sick man of Europe' is the incapacity and callousness of the Turkish Government. Official coruption has brought a bad name on a people who are natually excellent citizens—kindly, good-hearted and honest."

It is a great surprise to the person who has not lived among the Turks and believes them fire-breathing savages to learn of their love for flowers. Few Americans would like to be caught dead with blossoms in their hands, but a single bloom will make a wounded Turk happier than a dozen packages of cigarettes would a Tommy who had stopped a bullet.

Visitors to the hospitals of Constantinople have been almost mobbed by slightly wounded soldiers in their eagerness to share the wild flowers brought in from the banks of the Bosporus. When the flowers are distributed the inevitable cigarettes come next.

If no other incident could be cited to banish the adjective "unspeakable" in connection with the Turks, the following related by an American who served in a Turkish hospital would suffice:

A young Australian of twenty, with a nasty shrapnel wound in the thigh, chanced to be the only Britisher placed in a Turkish hospital at Beylerbey, on the Asiatic shore of the Bosporus. As the news of this lone English-speaking boy filtered through the native village, the old hanoums—the elder women—outdid themselves in visiting the lad and bearing him flowers and sweets.

"Perhaps he has a mother in England who is waiting for him," was the remark of one of them. So much attention was given the Australian that the other wounded in the hospital took to groaning tremendously whenever visitors would enter, in the hope of attracting part of the attention. Of course, their motive was evident, for the wounded Turk is the last man in the world to give way to his feelings under pain.

The Turkish doctor in charge was actually too kind to the lad, for in his solicitude to remove every fragment of the shrapnel he kept opening the wound every few days, until the boy could stand it no longer and succumbed.

He was buried with full military honors, and, after the Turkish custom, the coffin was borne upon the shoulders of a squad for fully five miles from Beylerbey to the English cemetery at Haidar Pacha. There, beneath the cypresses that shelter the English troops killed in the Crimean War—men whom Florence Nightingale could not save—they laid the Australian away. The Rev. Robert Frew, the English pastor, beloved alike by the Turks and British, read the burial service. The lad had a Christian funeral, with a company of Moslem troops as a guard of honor.

The gray-haired Turkish captain in charge of the hundred stood at the foot of the grave with tears running down his cheeks. "I lost a boy just like him at the Dardanelles," he said.

WHEN AND WHAT IS A BASEBALL VETERAN?

By Grantland Rice

Ned Hanlon, when a mere child.

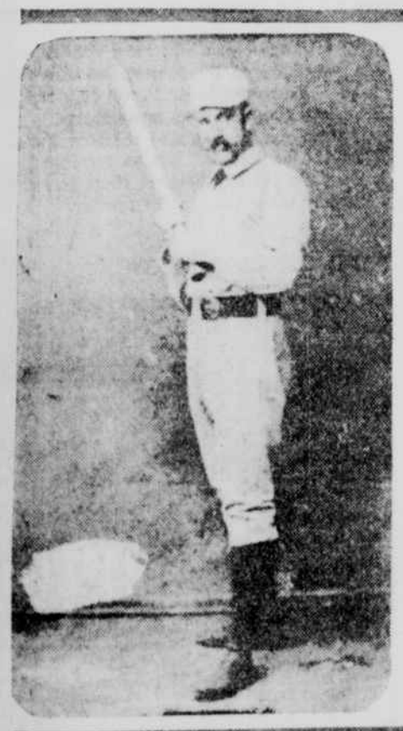
THE day of the mustached and bewhiskered athlete in baseball has been over for a number of summer moons. In the present epoch many players are rated as has-beens and turned adrift as being worn out veterans before they are old enough to develop a first class crop of whiskers. Duke Farrell, the veteran catcher, was discussing this change from the old-fashioned dynasty of swat.

"In the old days," said the Duke, "thirty or thirty-five years ago, the recruits who broke into baseball were from twenty-six to thirty years old. They had to be grown men, in the main, before any club wanted them. There were a few kids around twenty or twenty-one, but they were exceptions in the big leagues. We regarded players as youngsters then who to-day, at the same age, would be called veterans or has-beens. It strikes me as funny to hear beardless young men like Cobb, Collins, Baker and others under thirty referred to as having passed their primes. Why, Pop Anson batted .303 in the National League through 112 games when he was forty-three years old. And Cy Young was still pitching winning ball when he was forty-four.

"As a rule," continued the Duke, "if a kid of twenty or twenty-one reported to a club he was sent back to grow up and get six or seven years' experience before he was considered ripe for fast company. But if a ball player reported with a luxuriant growth of whiskers the odds were all in his favor, as he carried with him proof of his growth and maturity."

But the call for speed has displaced the oldtime heavyweight and his brush. The drive of the modern game demands youth—youth unencumbered by any added weight around the upper lip or the face. The ball player of thirty-two to-day is trying to look and act as if he were nineteen or twenty. He knows what the manager thinks of advancing years. Hence the disappearance of whiskers and such that were at one time a hirsute sesame into the portals of play.

Sam Crane, a rookie of '87.



Young Arthur Whitney had the makings of a player.

Nobody thought of calling Jim O'Rourke a "veteran."

Boyce of Washington was just an average young feller.

Boys like Tom Burns were not considered too young.

Mike Kelly, "Ten Thousand Dollar Mike," was an infant terrible.

Gillespie of the Giants, when a youth of much promise.